

To: Georgia Gray, NALP President

Eric Bono, Board Liason

Fred Thrasher, NALP Deputy Director

NALP Board of Directors

From: Andrianna Dunbar, Chair, Lawyer and Law Student Well Being Working Group

Amy Perez, Vice Chair, Lawyer and Law Student Well Being Working Group

Date: February 6, 2020

RE: Lawyer and Law Student Well Being Interest Group – Q3 Board Report

From on campus interviews and assisting students with decisions, to all of the projects that come at year end and establishing summer classes, the fall and early winter seasons are very busy for the members of the Lawyer and Law Student Well Being Working Group. We had one working group call and am pleased to report the work of integrating well-being with our populations continues. This is demonstrated in particular with presence of well being articles in the October, November and December NALP Bulletin. They included 1) Words Matter: The Language of Well-Being by Amber Haggins, Roslyn Pitts 2) No Wrong Door: Role of Career Services Staff in Law Student Well-Being by Alison Kennedy, and 3) Three Core Well-Being Principles That Can Transform the Legal Industry by Jarrett Green and Rebecca Simon. January's Bulletin announced Vice-Chair Amy Perez as the Service Excellence Award Recipient. Congratulations Amy on this well-deserved recognition!

Well Being Conversations During the Interview Process

We asked employer members to report on any conversations that pertained to well-being that students initiated during the interview process. Interestingly, there were few reports that students brought this up as a topic of conversation during the interview process. We discussed why this might be and settled on a few factors: 1) while students certainly think about and discuss what life might be like should they join a firm and the implications on their own well-being, they do not feel comfortable asking about this topic during the interview process because of potential impressions it may leave; 2) students might feel like asking is a form of self-disclosure, and while they feel supported within law school settings to do this, there could be nervousness around asking a potential employer about support mechanisms in place; and 3) students might already be learning this information on surveys (Vault, Chambers) and do not feel as though they need to ask.

We can agree that wellness should be a consideration when students are determining what employer and career experience they are choosing to seek. And we know from the law school perspective that it is a topic that is important to students. We spent some time on our most recent call discussing why students are not seeking this information from employers and what, if anything, should be done to affirmatively address well being during the interview process. If students do not feel empowered to ask about wellness and related resources/support available, employers could proactively address the issue by providing interviewers with talking points about well being efforts, highlighting the information

provided in the surveys that are addressing the topic, or opening the dialog in follow up conversations by asking if students have questions about the employers efforts around well being.

Given the amount of time, energy, and resources that law schools and employers are spending on wellness, it seems like the interview process could be an opportune time to begin reducing stigma around well-being by supporting conversations, whether student or employer initiated.

Eric Bono was also able to give us board report at a high level. He reported that wellness was evident in member feedback and in the strategic planning discussions. The feedback reflects that members are focused on the topic and understand the critical importance it has on the populations they support. Eric reported that the Board discussed well being as one focus of the strategic plan going forward. When we asked those on the call how could NALP help support the well being efforts that individuals are attempting to make, a few topics came up that we would like to share for consideration: 1) How do members support the lawyers and law students when you don't have the power to make systematic changes that affect well being; 2) How do members address the skeptics who look at wellness as a “hall pass”, not understanding it is not an attempt to work less hard, and 3) how can members make the case for the investment in well being and demonstrate that it is important and is part of the obligations as employers and educational institutions.

Amy as the CoLAP liaison will further address some of these topics in her forthcoming report.

Membership Development and Environmental Scanning

Our membership on NALP Connect continues to steadily grow and we are posting (and cross posting to adjacent communities) regularly. While NALP Connect seems to be a great place to post information and resources, it has not (at least in the communities I am in) become a place for discussion about a topic. While reply all emails are certainly burdensome, I do query how to encourage this cross-member dialogue and would be interested in how other groups are creating such opportunities.

We will plan on having an in-person meeting at the AEC and hopefully draw in more members. Given the number of plenaries with well being as its core topic, we will use those opportunities to grow the membership and cultivate conversations.